

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Name, title and level of final qualification(s)	Cert HE Psychology (Level 4)
Name and title of any exit qualification(s)	Certificate of Continuing Education
Awarding Body	University of London
Teaching Institution(s)	Birkbeck, University of London
Home School	School of Psychological Sciences
Location of delivery	Central London
Language of delivery and assessment	English
Mode of study, length of study and normal start month	Part-time (2-4 years) October
Professional, statutory or regulatory body	Not applicable
<u>QAA subject benchmark group(s)</u> <u>Higher Education Credit Framework for</u> <u>England</u>	Psychology
Birkbeck Course Code	UEHPSYCH
HECoS Code	100497 psychology
Start date of programme	Prior to 1980
Date of programme approval	Prior to 1980
Date of last programme amendment approval	May 2023
Valid for academic entry year	2026-27
Programme Director	Dr Michael Mallaghan
Date of last revision to document	30/04/2025

Admissions requirements

There are no formal entry requirements and the study for the award is open to all who apply and who feel that they may benefit. Students are advised that modules are taught and assessed at first year undergraduate level and an appropriate level of spoken and written English is required. Although proof is not required that a student is operating at this level, students are advised that inadequate English will not be compensated for when marking assessments.

Course aims

Main Aims:

- To provide a systematic introduction to key fields of modern psychology, while allowing students some choice of preferred topics.

Distinctive Features:

- All modules are 'open access' with no formal entry requirements.
- Modules are largely offered in the evenings with some daytime provision.
- Students are taught in small interactive classes, alongside fellow students who are keen to learn and who bring to the class a wide range of experience.
- Students who discover a passion and ability in the study of psychology have the opportunity to apply for acceptance onto the first year of the part-time BSc Psychology run by the Department of Psychological Sciences at Birkbeck:
 - Year 1: All students who complete Theoretical and conceptual Foundations of Psychology, Understanding Individual Differences, Understanding Applied Social Psychology and Understanding Research Methods for Psychology will be considered.
 - Year 2: To be considered students must pass with a mark of 50 per cent or above the assessments for Theoretical and conceptual Foundations of Psychology, Understanding Individual Differences, Understanding Applied Social Psychology, Understanding Neuroscience, Understanding Research Methods for Psychology and Research Methods in Practice.
- Students may also be able to use their Certificate to gain exemption when transferring to undergraduate study at other institutions of Higher Education.

Course structure

To gain the Certificate of Higher Education, students must successfully complete modules worth a total of 120 credit points. Students take the 6 core modules (worth a total of 90 credits) and choose option modules worth 30 credits.

Core Modules

- Theoretical and Conceptual Foundations of Psychology
- Understanding Individual Differences
- Understanding Research Methods for Psychology
- Understanding Neuroscience
- Understanding Applied Social Psychology
- Research Methods in Practice

Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credits	Comp/ Core/ Option	Expected Teaching Term(s)
Part-Time					
Year 1					
4	SCPS168H4	Understanding Research Methods for Psychology	15	Core	T1, T2
4	SCPS169H4	Research Methods in Practice	15	Core	T3
4	SCPS236H4	Theoretical and Conceptual Foundations of Psychology	15	Core	T1, T2
4	SCPS237H4	Understanding Neuroscience	15	Core	T1,T2
4	SCPS188H4	Understanding Applied Social Psychology	15	Core	T2
4	SCPS189H4	Understanding Individual Differences	15	Core	T3
4	SCPS235Z4	Psychology Study Skills	0	Comp	T1-2
Year 2					
4		Option from list below	15	Option	T1, 2 or 3
4		Option from list below	15	Option	T1.2 or 3
Indicative Options					
Students select 30 credits of options in year 2 – either 2 x 15 credits or 1 x 30 credits					
4	SCPS187H4	Understanding Applied Cognitive Psychology	15	Option	T1
4	SCPS190H4	Understanding Developmental Psychology	15	Option	T2
4	SCPS090H4	Critical Approaches to Attachment	15	Option	T3
4	FFPS127H4	Critical Approaches to Positive Psychology	15	Option	T3
4	SCPS173H4	Freud and Psychoanalysis: An Introduction	15	Option	T3
4	SCPS174H4	Health Psychology	15	Option	T3
4	FFPS072H4	Introduction to Cognitive Behaviour Therapy	15	Option	T2
4	SC12006H4	Understanding Psychological Disorders	15	Option	T3

Core: *Module must be taken and passed by student*

Compulsory: *Module must be taken but can be considered for compensated credit (see CAS regulations paragraph 24)*

Option: *Student can choose to take this module*

How you will learn

Your learning and teaching is organised to help you meet the learning outcomes (below) of the course. As a student, we expect you to be an active learner and to take responsibility for your learning, engaging with all of the material and sessions arranged for you.

Each course is divided into modules. You will find information on the virtual learning site (Moodle, see Academic Support below) about each of your modules, what to expect, the work you need to prepare, links to reading lists, information about how and when you will be assessed.

Your learning for this course will be organised around the activities outlined below.

All modules (15 credits) are taught in one term. Each term is usually 11 weeks long. Students attend the module once a week, usually for two hours. The total amount of time spent in class is usually 22 hours. The only exceptions are Understanding Research Methods for Psychology and Research Methods in Practice which have 42 hours of classroom time, 15 sessions in total, each running for 3 hours, divided between 2 hours taught sessions and a 1-hour workshop. The four extra sessions run Saturdays and focus on specific maths and research skill development.

Teaching takes a variety of forms. These may include lectures, seminars, in-class and out-of-class exercises, demonstrations, or class presentations by students, in groups or individually.

For each course taken, students are expected to allow additional weekly study time for their reading and coursework. Students are expected to undertake 10 hours of study for each credit, including that in class.

Classes are offered primarily in the evening, although some may be available in the daytime.

How we will assess you

The course will use a variety of assessment methods. Assessment is used to enhance your learning rather than simply to test it. For most of the modules associated with this course, your assessment will be through the following types of assessment.

For **15 credit modules**, there are usually two pieces of work to complete. Although the type of assessments will be varied across the modules to ensure a diversity of assessment, some modules will be an essay completed at home and an in-class essay at the end of the module, and others may be an essay and presentation or multiple choice.

The exceptions are Understanding Research Methods for Psychology and Research Methods in Practice.

For Understanding Research Methods for Psychology, students complete a report of 1500 words based upon a laboratory experiment carried out in class as a group and written up individually, one scenario-based timed test with a specific focus on methodology and ethics and another timed test that assesses the practical use of SPSS. Students must also submit a portfolio of worksheets completed during the module.

For Research Methods in Practice, students must complete two lab reports: one of 1500 words and one of 2000 words and a scenario-based timed test. They must also submit a portfolio of worksheets completed during the module.

Work completed at home:

The work completed at home is usually 1,500 words in length [or the equivalent]. Students will be penalised for submitting work significantly over or under this word limit. There will be no penalty for work that is 10% (150 words) too long or too short. However, five marks will be deducted for work that is between 150-500 words too long or too short. Ten marks will be deducted for work that is more than 500 words too long or too short.

The work completed at home may take various forms, depending on the module and the lecturer.

Timed essays:

Each time students have to complete a timed essay, they will be given an hour during class to

write an essay without referring to their books or to anyone else.

Timed essays allow students to apply their knowledge to a novel problem within a limited time. They also help students to assess how much of the material they can remember. They are designed to provide students who want to progress onto further study adequate preparation for sitting formal exams in the future.

Although writing under timed conditions may seem daunting, some students prefer timed essays because they take less time to prepare than coursework completed at home. Students will not be penalised for the length of timed essays, although pieces that are too short may not be of sufficient quality to receive the higher grades. Students do not have to provide a reference list at the end of their essay but do need to include references in the body of their essay if they refer to the work or ideas of others.

A lecturer may give the class a 'mock' timed essay – an opportunity to sit an essay under timed conditions and receive feedback. However, lecturers are not required to do this.

For Understanding Research Methods for Psychology and Research Methods in Practice, students must pass the scenario-based timed test to pass the module.

Multiple Choice in-class tests:

A series of statements, up to a maximum of 25, where you select the correct answer from a list of 3-4 and/or fill in the correct terms in the blank space. The test will be completed within an hour, either in-class or online at home, depending on the module.

Presentations:

Some modules may require a presentation (usually 10 minutes), ranging from a review/evaluation of a published paper to applying the concepts you learn to a case or situation. Presentations are typically delivered in class.

Pre-requisites:

Successful completion of Understanding Research Methods for Psychology is a pre-requisite for Research Methods in Practice.

Learning outcomes (what you can expect to achieve)

'Learning outcomes' indicate what you should be able to know or do at the end of your course. Providing them helps you to understand what your teachers will expect and also the learning requirements upon which you will be assessed.

At the end of this course, you should be able to:

Subject Specific

1) Understanding of the discipline of psychology

Students will be able to:

- Describe the development of ideas within psychology.
- Discuss key assumptions, methods and debates within specific areas of psychology. Give a basic description of the range of factors likely to impact upon human behaviour and to and to discuss the interplay between some of these.

2) Understanding of scientific practice

Students will be able to:

- Explain how a range of key research methodologies may be applied.
- Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of different research paradigms and methods.
- Describe the ways in which concepts and theories etc may be evaluated.

3) **Understanding of patterns and of diversity**

Students will be able to:

- Illustrate the variability and diversity of psychological functioning.
- Critically discuss general patterns in behaviour, psychological functioning and experience.
- Critically discuss the range of influences on psychological functioning (including biological and social influences).

4) **Understanding of how psychology may be applied**

Students will be able to:

- Identify and critically discuss ways in which specific principles and concepts within psychology may be applied in practice.

Intellectual

5) **The ability to compare, contrast and organise approaches and theories within psychology**

Students will be able to:

- Compare and contrast key features of the main approaches within psychology.
- Describe how the different approaches address specific topics
- Identify the similarities, differences, contradictions and complementary elements of key theories within psychology.

6) **Formulating arguments**

Students will be able to:

- Restate key arguments in psychology, including the arguments for and against the validity and explanatory power of the main approaches and key theories within psychology.
- Write a coherent and structured line of argument.

7) **Formulating research questions**

Students will be able to:

- Propose simple research questions.
- Choose appropriate ways of answering research questions, taking into account relevant ethical issues.

8) **The ability to evaluate research findings**

Students will be able to:

- Describe and discuss qualitative and quantitative data.
- Describe the principles that may be applied in the interpretation and evaluation of research findings.
- Use basic statistical and numerical methods in relation to quantitative data.

Practical

9) **Ability to manage information**

- Recognise and employ the skills necessary to work in depth on specific topics, either independently or as part of a team.
- Recognise and employ the skills necessary to complete assignments.

10) **Ability to employ research skills**

- Collect simple data and conduct a simple analysis of that data.
- Present qualitative and/or quantitative data in an appropriate format.
- Use the basic functions offered by statistical software

Personal and Social

11) **Ability to act as a self-directed, reflective learner**

- Recognise, practice and employ a range of strategies to support personal learning,

including the ability to reflect on the success of strategies and to effectively solve problems.

- Recognise and use a range of sources of learning support.

12) The ability to work in groups

- Recognise benefits of working in groups.
- Recognise, practice and employ strategies for increasing the effectiveness of group functioning.

13) Ability to communicate effectively

- Participate in small group discussion/debate/ exercises by both listening and communicating own ideas effectively.
- The ability to present own ideas on issues addressed on the course in an appropriate and effective manner.
- The ability to communicate the results of study accurately and reliably in writing and/or in person.

14) Understanding of how the award has relevance to the student's current and future career / life

- Identify courses of interest and of use in long term plans.
- Understand possible routes of progression from award onto further study.

Careers and further study

Students enrolled on the Certificate HE (Psychology) may be eligible to progress to the College BSc Psychology programme, depending on the modules completed and module grades.

Entry to Year 1 (Part time):

All students who complete Theoretical and conceptual Foundations of Psychology, , Understanding Applied Cognitive Psychology, Understanding Applied Social Psychology and Understanding Research Methods for Psychology will be considered.

Year 2 (part-time):

To be considered students must pass with a mark of 50 per cent or above the assessments for Theoretical and conceptual Foundations of Psychology, Understanding Applied Cognitive Psychology, Understanding Applied Social Psychology, Biological and Neuropsychology, Understanding Research Methods for Psychology and Research Methods in Practice.

Birkbeck offers a range of careers support to its students. You can find out more on [the careers pages of our website.](#)

Academic regulations and course management

Birkbeck's academic regulations are contained in its [Common Award Scheme Regulations](#) and Policies published by year of application on the Birkbeck website.

You will have access to a course handbook on Moodle and this will outline how your course is managed, including who to contact if you have any questions about your module or course.

Support for your study

Your learning at Birkbeck is supported by your teaching team and other resources and people in the College there to help you with your study. Birkbeck uses a virtual learning environment called Moodle and each course has a dedicated Moodle page and there are further Moodle sites for each of your modules. This will include your course handbook.

Birkbeck will introduce you to the Library and IT support, how to access materials online, including using Moodle, and provide you with an orientation which includes an online Moodle module to guide you through all of the support available. You will also be allocated a personal tutor and provided with information about learning support offered within your School and by the College.

Please check our website for more information about student support services. This covers the whole of your time as a student with us including learning support and support for your wellbeing.

As all modules within the programme are open access, study skills are incorporated into the learning outcomes of every module. The precise manner in which these learning outcomes are met will depend on the composition and therefore the needs of the class. However, teaching resources are made available to lecturers to help them incorporate study skills into their modules and handouts are available for students who are interested in developing these skills. In addition all students will be enrolled on the 'Study skills for Psychology' Module. A compulsory non-credit bearing module. These sessions will consist over Saturday workshops which enables students among other things to identify the study skills they already have and those they may need to develop. These workshops are free of charge to help them prepare for study and to develop the necessary study skills. These may include for example finding resources, reading, essay writing skills, revising for exams and critical thinking.

Quality and standards at Birkbeck

Birkbeck's courses are subject to our quality assurance procedures. This means that new courses must follow our design principles and meet the requirements of our academic regulations. Each new course or module is subject to a course approval process where the proposal is scrutinised by subject specialists, quality professionals and external representatives to ensure that it will offer an excellent student experience and meet the expectation of regulatory and other professional bodies.

You will be invited to participate in an online survey for each module you take. We take these surveys seriously and they are considered by the course team to develop both modules and the overall courses. Please take the time to complete any surveys you are sent as a student.

We conduct an annual process of reviewing our portfolio of courses which analyses student achievement, equality data and includes an action plan for each department to identify ongoing enhancements to our education, including changes made as a result of student feedback.

Our periodic review process is a regular check (usually every four years) on the courses by department with a specialist team including students.

Each course will have an external examiner associated with it who produces an annual report and any recommendations. Students can read the most recent external examiner reports on the course Moodle pages. Our courses are all subject to Birkbeck Baseline Standards for our Moodle module information. This supports the accessibility of our education including expectations of what information is provided online for students.

The information in this programme specification has been approved by the College's Academic Board and every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information it contains.

Programme specifications are reviewed periodically. If any changes are made to courses, including core and/or compulsory modules, the relevant department is required to provide a revised programme specification. Students will be notified of any changes via Moodle.

Further information about specifications and an archive of programme specifications for the College's courses is [available online](#).

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